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ABSTRACT

This 1979 report presents updated cost and enrollment statistics for Catholic elementary schools, along with brief explanations of the data. Twelve tables give figures on the following: (1) enrollment (Catholic and public schools), (2) school size, (3) projections of school age populations through 1986, (4) operating costs, (5) per pupil costs (schools by region), (6) per pupil costs (percentages by region), (7) revenue by source and region (dollars), (8) revenue by source and region (percentages), (9) per pupil revenue, (10) tuition, (11) pupil/teacher ratios (schools by region), and (12) pupil/teacher ratios (percentages by region). (Author/LD)

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Catholic Elementary Schools And Their Finances 1979

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Catholic Elementary Schools And Their Finances 1979

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CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND THEIR FINANCES

Private education is currently a powerful force affecting the American educational scene. As Table 1 shows, nonpublic education represented a significant share of the nation's 1977-78 elementary schools (17%) and enrollment (13%). Furthermore, projections indicate that the nonpublic sector will remain public education's partner for the realistically foreseeable future. Consequently, although the dramatic declines of Catholic school enrollments in the late 60's and early 70's caused many to prophesy the end of the private school system, the financing of Catholic elementary schools is today a question of great importance.

According to National Center for Education Statistics (HEW) data, during the 11-year period from 1965-66 to 1976-77, the number of elementary and secondary nonpublic schools declined from 19,946 to 17,950 (10%). Enrollment declined from 6.3 million pupils to 4.8 million (24%). Closer analysis shows that, while Catholic schools were undergoing decline and reevaluation, the rest of the nonpublic sector was gradually increasing in schools and enrollment. During the past few years, the Catholic school situation has been relatively stable, so nonpublic education should be more numerically important in the future.

For example, the following figures summarize the Catholic elementary school dynamics of the past few years:

			Teachers	
	Schools	Pupils	Lay	Religious
1976-77	8,265	2,483,000	66,146	33,870
1977-78	8,223	2,421,000	68,231	31,508
1978-79	8,159	2,365,000	69,584	28,955

Less than 1% of the elementary schools now close or consolidate each year. The current rate of enrollment decline (about 2%) is approximately equal to the decline of school-age children. Lay teachers continue to replace religious staff, and this does add to the financial problems, but the essential character and quality of the school do not seem to be affected. Catholic elementary education still lives with many problems, but recent data clearly indicates a stable situation and a supportive demand. As Table 2 shows, most Catholic elementary schools are small, in the 100-300 pupil range.

Public elementary education comprises about 83% of the schools, serves about 87% of the students, and employs about 87% of the teachers, but it should be kept in mind that the public sector is in a period of serious adjustment due to the declining number of school-age children (Table 3). The following are NCES figures on actual and predicted elementary-age children (ages 5-13):

	Elementary Age (5-13)	% Index
1970-71	36,484,000	100.0
1975-76	33,300,000	91.3
1980-81	30,164,000	82.7
1985-86	30,508,000	83.6

The decline should end about 1983-84, because of more child-bearing adults. There is no way to know when, if ever, enrollments will return to the 1970-71 level.

Table No. 1
Elementary School Statistics
1977-78

	Schools	%	Pupils	%	Teachers	%
Public Schools	68,780	82.7	24,993,200	87.3	1,179,920	86.9
Catholic Schools	8,200	9.9	2,421,200	8.5	99,760	7.3
Other Church-Related	3,620	4.3	658,600	2.3	37,620	2.8
Other Private Schools	2,560	3.1	559,200	1.9	40,260	3.0
Total Elementary...	83,160	100.0	28,632,200	100.0	1,357,560	100.0

Sources: Selected Statistics of Private Schools, Fall 1977, NCES (HEW)
Estimates of School Statistics, 1978-79, NEA

Table No. 2
Elementary School Sizes
1976-77 and 1977-78

	1976-77		1977-78	
Enrollment	Public	Catholic	Public	Catholic
1-100	4,956	571	4,739	543
101-200	8,265	1,971	8,081	1,924
201-300	9,609	2,633	9,528	2,696
301-400	10,937	1,259	11,146	1,250
401-500	10,086	729	10,220	724
501-750	16,001	870	15,758	863
751-1000	6,078	190	5,921	173
Over 1000	3,590	58	3,384	50
Total...	69,522	8,281	68,777	8,223

Source: School Marketing Services, 1976-77 and 1977-78, Curriculum Information Center

Table No. 3
Projections of School Age Populations
1977-78 thru 1985-86

	U.S. Population		Catholic Families	
	Ages 5-17	%	Ages 5-17	%
1977-78	48,751,000	100.0	14,241,000	100.0
1978-79	47,738,000	97.9	13,971,000	98.1
1979-80	46,670,000	95.7	13,701,000	96.2
1980-81	45,772,000	93.9	13,432,000	94.3
1981-82	45,045,000	92.4	13,162,000	92.4
1982-83	44,530,000	91.3	12,893,000	90.5
1983-84	44,347,000	91.0	12,825,000	90.1
1984-85	44,492,000	91.3	12,756,000	89.6
1985-86	44,866,000	92.0	12,688,000	89.1

Sources: Projections of Education Statistics to 1984-85, NCES
The Next 15 Years, United States Catholic Conference

General Comments

NCEA is often asked for national data regarding Catholic school expenditures and revenues. The limited information collected from diocesan offices and schools is used to discuss the financial dimensions of Catholic education with the appropriate educational agencies and federal authorities. It should be remembered, however, that the financial figures used here are not "facts", but estimates and guidelines, as are most national statistics.

All of our estimates are of operating revenues and expenses only, and say nothing of capital improvements or debt retirement provisions. Also important is the fact that Catholic elementary schools do not formally record the value of the Contributed Services of religious community members or diocesan clergy. Consequently, total operating revenues and expenses are understated by the value of these donated services. On the Catholic high school level, these Contributed Services constitute about 14% of the total operating revenue, but the elementary percentage is unknown.

Estimate of National Operating Expenses

Our best estimate is that Catholic elementary schools spent about $1.2 billion for operating expenses in 1977-78. The national per pupil cost rose to $500, an 8% increase over 1976-77. The following summary provides some interesting comparisons:

	Total Operating Expenses	Enrollment	Per Pupil Cost
1970-71	$ 806 Million	3,359,300	$240
1976-77	$ 1,149 Million	2,483,100	$463
1977-78	$ 1,213 Million	2,421,200	$500

Higher salaries and costs cause the total amount spent annually to continue to increase, despite fewer students.

Table 4 lists each state with its estimated per pupil cost and total operating expenses. It is difficult to compare the national 1977-78 per pupil cost of $500 with the public sector, since Catholic schools do not book Contributed Services and public schools combine elementary and secondary costs. The National Education Association estimated the combined elementary-secondary per pupil cost for 1977-78 at $1,644.

Past Efforts and Estimates

Reliable state, regional, and national estimates can be made from realistic PP costs. The following summary of previously estimated per pupil costs reasonably reflects what has happened to Catholic elementary school finances:

	PP Cost	Increase	
1969-70	$ 200	- %	
1970-71	240	20.0	
1971-72	280*	16.7	*Estimated; other
1972-73	315	12.5	costs have been
1973-74	350	11.1	reported
1974-75	385*	10.0	
1975-76	420*	10.0	
1976-77	463	10.0	
1977-78	500	8.0	

In the early 1970's, staff changes and revised salaries brought about a complete financial upheaval. In the mid 70's, annual increases were still expensive but were leveling. Currently, costs seem to vary with the rate of inflation.

Table No. 4
Catholic Elementary School Operating Costs
1977-78

	Schools	Pupils	Per Pupil Cost	Estimated Expenses
Connecticut	172	43,590	$492	$ 21,437,000
Massachusetts	262	73,414	485	35,622,000
New Hampshire	34	9,382	419	3,931,000
Rhode Island	64	18,751	391	7,332,000
Vermont	12	3,002	442	1,327,000
Maine	23	6,448	344	2,218,000
New England	567	154,587	465	$ 71,867,000
Delaware	29	10,736	470	$ 5,046,000
Washington, D.C.	83	26,918	510	13,728,000
Maryland	93	31,513	519	16,355,000
New Jersey	477	147,534	519	76,615,000
New York	959	341,544	494	168,875,000
Pennsylvania	804	250,591	430	107,637,000
Mideast	2,445	808,836	480	$ 388,256,000
Illinois	685	217,813	594	$ 129,357,000
Indiana	211	50,841	550	27,952,000
Michigan	336	100,787	620	62,443,000
Ohio	534	173,977	520	90,494,000
Wisconsin	422	99,728	531	52,947,000
Great Lakes	2,188	643,146	565	$ 363,193,000
Iowa	150	35,660	573	$ 20,426,000
Kansas	91	19,075	499	9,519,000
Minnesota	229	55,283	586	32,385,000
Missouri	283	71,407	475	33,948,000
Nebraska	99	20,920	546	11,420,000
North Dakota	33	6,546	557	3,649,000
South Dakota	28	5,424	483	2,621,000
Plains	913	214,315	532	$ 113,968,000
Alabama	51	12,223	437	$ 5,336,000
Arkansas	32	5,443	380	2,068,000
Florida	155	53,073	517	27,457,000
Georgia	30	9,591	564	5,408,000
Kentucky	166	39,090	519	20,304,000
Louisiana	198	79,791	398	31,795,000
Mississippi	37	8,358	489	4,086,000
North Carolina	38	9,222	422	3,889,000
South Carolina	26	6,385	475	3,033,000
Tennessee	44	10,821	513	5,546,000
Virginia	54	17,604	570	10,043,000
West Virginia	37	6,624	485	3,213,000
Southeast	868	258,225	473	$ 122,178,000

Regional Per Pupil Costs

Geographical variations appear when the per pupil costs are viewed regionally. As was true in 1976-77, PP costs for the Great Lakes and Plains regions in 1977-78 were above the national average, while all other regions were below. The Plains region has the smallest schools (average size is 234) and the lowest pupil/teacher ratios, factors producing a higher per pupil cost. The following are regional PP costs:

	1976-77	1977-78	Increase
New England	$403	$465	15.4%
Mideast	461	480	4.1
Great Lakes	509	565	11.0
Plains	498	532	6.8
Southeast	425	473	11.3
West & Far West	413	448	8.5
United States	463	500	8.0

Costs in the West and the Plains appear to have increased about the national average (8%), while the Southeast and Great Lakes increased more than the average (11%). Per pupil costs increased very slightly in the Mideast (4%), but greatly in New England (15%).

Per pupil costs are useful guidelines, but at times may not reflect cost changes as reliably as other methods, since they vary not only with dollars expended but also with pupils served. As for relating to public school increases, public school 1977-78 per pupil costs increased 10.1% over 1976-77, according to the National Education Association.

National and Regional Cost Ranges

Tables 5 and 6 point out how 1976-77 per pupil costs range throughout the nation. For example, most (58.1%) New England schools reported a per pupil cost of less than $400, below the national average. On the other hand, about one-half of the schools in the Great Lakes and Plains regions reported PP costs of $500 and over. The Mideast reported that exactly one-third of its schools had PP costs of between $401-500.

Since the value of Contributed Services is not normally booked, salaries for religious communities and diocesan clergy staff members would be relatively low, holding down the PP cost. The following percentages describe the full-time staff as lay or religious:

	Sisters	Male Relig.	Lay	Total	PP Cost
New England	46.2%	.9%	52.9%	100.0%	$403
Mideast	35.9	.9	63.2	100.0	461
Great Lakes	29.8	.6	69.6	100.0	509
Plains	30.9	.8	68.3	100.0	498
Southeast	25.6	.8	73.6	100.0	425
West & Far West	33.7	.9	65.4	100.0	413
United States	33.1	.8	66.1	100.0	463

New England has a high percentage of religious and most of its schools reported a low per pupil cost. The Great Lakes region has a high percentage of lay staff and the highest per pupil cost. The South and the West seem to illustrate another factor, however, ie. the individual salary scale. For example, the West percentages are almost identical to the national average, but the PP cost is lower, presumably because salary scales are lower.

Table No. 4 (continued)
Catholic Elementary School Operating Costs
1977-78

	Schools	Pupils	Per Pupil Cost	Estimated Expenses
Alaska	3	487	$511	$ 249,000
Arizona	46	13,278	380	5,047,000
California	601	184,561	415	76,590,000
Colorado	59	14,328	591	8,469,000
Hawaii	31	11,226	432	4,850,000
Idaho	12	1,808	520	940,000
Montana	22	3,629	529	1,920,000
New Mexico	31	7,435	394	2,932,000
Nevada	11	2,754	460	1,267,000
Oklahoma	28	5,107	556	2,837,000
Oregon	54	10,865	528	5,733,000
Texas	243	62,954	454	28,559,000
Utah	8	2,142	395	846,000
Washington	86	19,916	617	12,286,000
Wyoming	7	1,628	446	726,000
West	1,242	342,118	448	$ 153,251,000
United States	8,223	2,421,227	500	$1,212,713,000

Table No. 5
Elementary Per Pupil Operating Costs - Schools By Region
1976-77

	Less Than $300	$300-400	$401-500	$501-600	Over $600	All Schools
New England	112	226	142	65	37	582
Mideast	246	604	821	453	340	2,464
Great Lakes	97	361	652	591	503	2,204
Plains	48	160	266	229	214	917
Southeast	127	261	258	133	93	872
West	206	431	338	143	124	1,242
United States	836	2,043	2,477	1,614	1,311	8,281

Table No. 6
Elementary Per Pupil Operating Costs - Percentages by Region
1976-77

	Less Than $300	$300-400	$401-500	$501-600	Over $600	All Schools
New England	19.2%	38.9%	24.4%	11.1%	6.4%	100.0%
Mideast	10.0	24.5	33.3	18.4	13.8	100.0
Great Lakes	4.4	16.4	29.6	26.8	22.8	100.0
Plains	5.2	17.5	29.0	25.0	23.3	100.0
Southeast	14.6	29.9	29.6	15.2	10.7	100.0
West	16.6	34.7	27.2	11.5	10.0	100.0
United States	10.1	24.7	29.9	19.5	15.8	100.0

Estimate of National Operating Revenue

Of the 161 dioceses in 1977-78, 110 (68%) supplied useable data about the sources of revenue which met the operating expenses of $1.2 billion. The information reported seems reliable regionally, but not on a state-by-state basis, since a few key dioceses were missing.

As shown by Tables 7 and 8, the major share of $638.5 million (52.6%) came from subsidies by the parish to the school. Tuition & fees supplied $453.3 million, or 37.4%. Fundraising activities provided $69.6 million, or 5.7%. Diocesan subsidies accounted for only $9.4 million, less than 1% nationally, and the "other income" category catches all miscellaneous items, many of which are offset by expenses.

Regionally, the South and the West have the lowest parish subsidy percentages, receiving most of their revenue from tuition & fees. The Mideast reflects the national averages. New England's parish subsidy is well below the national average, but it receives the highest percentage from fundraising activities (11.1%). The Great Lakes and Plains regions receive about one-fourth of their revenue from tuition & fees and about two-thirds from parish subsidy.

Comparison of Per Pupil Revenues

Table 9 compares the best revenue data from previous years on a per pupil basis. As mentioned, parish subsidies remain the major revenue factor, but the increases in tuition & fees have changed the proportions. In 1969-70, parish subsidy supplied about 63% of the revenue and tuition 27%. By 1977-78, parish subsidy supplied 52% and tuition 37%.

It is interesting that the percentages have changed very little over the past four years. Catholic elementary schools are basically continuing the revenue patterns established by 1973-74. The amounts are greater, of course, with per pupil costs rising from $350 in 1973-74 to $500 in 1977-78, but the relationship of the two revenue cornerstones, parish subsidy and tuition, is about the same.

Perhaps these national overview figures are indicating that each Catholic elementary school is gradually identifying its own particular "revenue package", and that as a result its financial picture is becoming more stable and predictable. Once a school finds the revenue combination which is realistic and feasible, using the elements of subsidy, tuition, and fund raising, the adjustments from year to year are less difficult to implement. Nationally, the combination is about one-half from the parish, one-third from tuition, and the remainder from wherever it can be raised.

Tuition and Basic Fee Charges

The fact that tuition has increased in Catholic elementary schools during the past decade is certainly not news, but former patterns and present ranges may be of interest. As Table 10 shows, almost 72% of the elementary schools charged less than $100 for tuition and basic fees in 1970-71. During this current 1978-79 school year, tuition & fees charges are more evenly distributed over the ranges shown, with the $200-299 range representing the major share (23.9%). It is noteworthy that about 20% of the schools now charge $400 and over. It is interesting that about 1300 schools reported that they charged no tuition in 1970-71, while only 340 reported zero tuition in 1978-79. All charges refer to a parishoner's first child in the family.

Table No. 7
Elementary School Revenue - By Source and Region
1977-78 (Millions of Dollars)

	Tuition + Fees	Parish Subsidy	Diocesan Subsidy	Fund Raising	Other	Total
New England	$ 31.3	$ 26.7	$2.5	$ 8.0	$ 3.4	$ 71.9
Mideast	142.5	208.5	2.3	26.8	8.1	388.2
Great Lakes	90.8	244.1	1.1	15.2	12.0	363.2
Plains	25.1	81.5	1.1	3.8	2.5	114.0
Southeast	75.5	34.8	1.5	4.3	6.1	122.2
West	88.1	42.9	.9	11.5	9.8	153.2
United States	$453.3	$638.5	$9.4	$69.6	$41.9	$1212.7

Table No. 8
Percentages of Revenue - By Source and Region
1977-78

	Tuition + Fees	Parish Subsidy	Diocesan Subsidy	Fund Raising	Other	Total
New England	43.6%	37.1%	3.5%	11.1%	4.7%	100.0%
Mideast	36.7	53.7	.6	6.9	2.1	100.0
Great Lakes	25.0	67.2	.3	4.2	3.3	100.0
Plains	22.0	71.5	1.0	3.3	2.2	100.0
Southeast	61.8	28.5	1.2	3.5	5.0	100.0
West	57.5	28.0	.6	7.5	6.4	100.0
United States	37.4	52.6	.8	5.7	3.5	100.0

Table No. 9
Per Pupil Revenue
1969-70 to 1977-78

	1969-70		1973-74		1977-78	
Source	Amt.	%	Amt.	%	Amt.	%
Tuition + Fees	$ 54	26.8	$135	38.6	$187	37.4
Parish Subsidy	126	63.1	185	52.9	263	52.6
Diocesan Subsidy	3	1.3	4	1.1	4	.8
Fund Raising + Other	17	8.8	26	7.4	46	9.2
Per Pupil Revenue	$200	100.0	$350	100.0	$500	100.0

Table No. 10
Elementary School Tuition Charges - By Range
1970-71 and 1978-79

	1970-71		1976-77		1978-79	
Tuition Charges	Schools	%	Schools	%	Schools	%
Under $100	6,719	71.7	1,722	20.8	1,460	17.9
$100-199	2,024	21.6	2,047	24.7	1,591	19.5
$200-299	384	4.1	1,904	23.0	1,950	23.9
$300-399	84	.9	1,581	19.1	1,485	18.2
$400 and Over	159	1.7	1,027	12.4	1,673	20.5
	9,370	100.0	8,281	100.0	8,159	100.0

Table No. 11
Elementary Pupil/Teacher Ratios - Schools By Region
1976-77

	Under 21:1	21-28	29-36	Over 36:1	All Schools
New England	77	340	156	9	582
Mideast	493	1,114	722	135	2,464
Great Lakes	430	1,241	505	28	2,204
Plains	408	464	44	1	917
Southeast	196	461	206	9	872
West	225	472	421	124	1,242
United States	1,829	4,092	2,054	306	8,281

Table No. 12
Elementary Pupil/Teacher Ratios - Percentages By Region
1976-77

	Under 21:1	21-28	29-36	Over 36:1	All Schools
New England	13.3%	58.4%	26.8%	1.5%	100.0%
Mideast	20.0	45.2	29.3	5.5	100.0
Great Lakes	19.5	56.3	22.9	1.3	100.0
Plains	44.5	50.6	4.8	.1	100.0
Southeast	22.5	52.9	23.6	1.0	100.0
West	18.1	38.0	33.9	10.0	100.0
United States	22.1	49.4	24.8	3.7	100.0

Pupil/Teacher Ratios and Class Sizes

Statements are still occasionally made that Catholic elementary schools have excessively large classes. Tables 11 and 12 analyze the pupil/teacher ratios (class sizes) of the 8,281 schools in 1976-77. Nationally, half (4,092 or 49.4%) of the schools had 21-28 pupils per teacher. About one-fourth (24.8% had a ratio of 29-36 pupils per teacher. A large number of schools (1,829 or 22.1%) had less than 21 pupils per teacher. On the basis of these figures, class sizes appear teachable and manageable.

Regionally, most (58.4%) New England schools are in the 21-28 pupils per teacher range, as are most (56.3%) of the schools in the Great Lakes region. The Mideast has the most schools (722 or 29.3%) in the 29-36 range. The Plains has a surprising 44.5% of its schools with a ratio of less than 21 pupils per teacher. The Southeast is very close to the national average, but the West has about 34% in the 29-36 range and 10% in the over 36:1 range.

Catholic schools have deliberately reduced their staff at a rate slower than the enrollment decline during the past decade, in a strong effort to improve their professional staffs and to reduce class sizes. As a result, the national pupil/teacher ratio has been lowered from 31 students per teacher in 1968-69 to 24 students in 1978-79.

The Need for Fiscal Management

Catholic schools, dioceses, and state conferences have greatly improved the quality of their financial information during the past several years, and have used this information to analyze their financial situation. Through better management, they seem to be more in control of their finances. It is pivotal that this management continue to improve, and that cooperation among religious community personnel, parish administrative leaders, diocesan officials, lay staff members, and parent groups leads to sound financial judgments in the years ahead.

The 8,000 Catholic elementary schools were supported in the past by large subsidies, low tuition charges, and the contributed services of the sisters. Financial troubles were usually resolved quickly by the parish or diocese. During the past decade, however, several factors have combined to produce a more complex financial picture, e.g. the declining number of religious staff, the recognized need for higher lay salaries, inflation, the movement of people to the suburbs where new construction is costly, and a changed theological atmosphere in which attendance at a non-Catholic school and apostolates other than school apostolates are more acceptable. Today, many parishes structure the school to resolve its own financial problems, given a budgeted subsidy. Consequently, parish school boards and school administrators are now responsible for financial management which may call for training, experience, and expertise.

Fortunately, many parishes have the benefit of trained professionals from among their parishoners. Also, the diocesan school office can often provide financial guidance. In addition to these assistances, however, it is increasingly necessary that administrators and board members, whether lay or religious, become more familiar with financial matters. Only then can they responsibly evaluate the financial consequences of school policies. Financial training, conferences, and courses are today important elements in a stable Catholic school.

Conclusion

This report has been prepared to present some basic financial information about Catholic elementary schools. It is made possible by the excellent cooperation extended to the annual NCEA data gathering program, which in recent years has been executed jointly with the National Center for Education Statistics and the Curriculum Information Center. We sincerely hope that this report is of assistance to you.

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